



The 2022 season got underway last weekend with round 1 being at Phillip Island. It has never been my strongest track but we looked at turning that around and settling in on the new Yamaha R6. After a two-day test 4 week prior, I knew what I had to do.

It started off with Friday practise got off to a slow start in the first practise 2 seconds off my usual pace. I was able to pick it up in the second session with a 1min, 37.810, 0.3secs off my PB but didn't go any quicker in the third and final session. Rear grip was a big issue for us all weekend and especially as the track got hotter and tyres got worn more later in the session. The pace at the front was already fast on Friday as expected but we would give it everything in qualifying.

Saturday consisted of two 25 minutes qualifying sessions and with the track getting close to 50 degrees Friday the plan was to push hard in the first session. Going out on new tyres on lap 13 I was able to get a time in of 1min 37.410. giving me provisional 7th. I had one more lap left but unfortunately got held up by a slower rider. Having a limited number of tyres allowed for the weekend I was on old ones for the second qualifying and wasn't able to go any quicker. Ended up 7th on the grid for Sunday's 10 lap races. Not as high up as I would have liked, 0.1sec would have got me on the second row in 6th so the pace is quick.



Sunday ended up providing some good weather for some good racing and also not so good. The biggest change I had to adapt to on the Yamaha was the clutch and how to get it off the start line. I had done a few practise starts and still wasn't confident with it and knew it was going to play a big part in how the race went. Not letting the clutch out quick enough costed me three positions as it slipped to much off the line. I was now in 10th and knew I had to make up places quickly on the first lap. I was able to get back to 8th and then hunt down the group of 4 riders in front.

Catching them on the fifth lap was too late as two riders had pulled away. Was then in a battle for 5th and made the move to 6th down the straight. Then using double slip stream to 5th into the fast turn 1. I held there until the last lap where got passed into turn 1 then making a move back into turn 4 cost me time as I ran wide. We ended up finishing 6th by .053secs and with a new PB of 1min37.031. This is my best race result at Phillip Island and I will take that but knew the pace was there to fight for podium positions if the start was better.

Wanting to be in the fight for 3rd in race 2 didn't quite happen. The bad start in race 1 was explained when the clutch slipped heaps off the line and I got no drive. Unsure at the time that the clutch had gone I continued until halfway around the first lap it revved up a little on corner exits. Then coming onto the straight there was no drive. I then knew what had happened and couldn't believe it. I continued for another two laps but then had to pull in to unfortunately retire before doing more damage. This wasn't the result we wanted to start the year with and I was very frustrated.

Even with the DNF we showed our potential on the Yamaha and I put in some of my best results on one of my weaker tracks. Now sitting 14th in the championship is not ideal but we know the issue and will get the bike sorted. Will be aiming for that podium and come back stronger for round 2 at Queensland Raceway on 18-20th of this month. Can't thank Dad and Jase who put in the time on the road and at the track. And everyone behind me that allows me to chase my dreams:

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